

**SUO-MOTU STATEMENT OF THE HOME MINISTER ON  
DECEMBER 11, 2008 ON THE RECENT TERRORIST ATTACKS IN  
MUMBAI**

I wish to make a statement on the terrorist attacks that took place in Mumbai between November 26, 2008 and November 29, 2008. With deep regret, I have to report to this House that 164 persons (civilians and security personnel) lost their lives and 308 persons were injured. Among the civilians killed were 26 foreigners belonging to many nationalities. Besides, nine terrorists were killed in the operations by the security forces. One terrorist was overpowered and captured.

2. At the outset, I wish to pay homage to the innocent civilians who were killed and the brave security personnel who laid down their lives in order to save the lives of many others. I offer my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The Government of India and the Government of Maharashtra have announced a set of measures as compensation for the terrible loss suffered by the families. Monetary compensation and free treatment have been offered to the injured. While words of sympathy and money can never adequately recompense the loss, I sincerely hope that our gesture will bring some comfort to the affected families.

3. The broad facts of the horrific tragedy are, by now, known to the Honourable Members and the people of India. According to information gathered during the course of the investigations, it appears that 10 Pakistani nationals belonging to the Lashkar-e-Toiba, a proscribed terrorist outfit, had left Karachi on November 23, 2008; boarded a launch by the name of *Al Hussaini*; accosted and hijacked an Indian fishing vessel, *M. V. Kuber*, off the coast of Gujarat; killed its occupants; and a few miles short of the coast of Mumbai abandoned the fishing vessel, got into an inflatable rubber dinghy, and landed near Budhwar Park, Colaba, Mumbai between 8.00 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. on November 26, 2008. The terrorists split into four groups and the main targets of the four groups were (i) Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST); (ii) the Leopold Café and Taj Hotel; (iii) the Oberoi – Trident Hotel and; (iv) the Nariman House. These attacks involved indiscriminate firing, throwing of grenades and bomb blasts at 13 locations. Considering the extensive publicity that the whole episode has already received in the media and through official statements, it may not be necessary for me to go into the details of what happened at each of these locations.

4. I shall now give you a brief account of the response of the authorities to the terrorist attack. At the CST, security personnel belonging to the Mumbai police and the RPF confronted two heavily armed terrorists. After causing mayhem at CST, the two terrorists escaped via a lane opposite the station. Meanwhile, as soon as news of the firing at the CST and near Cama Hospital was received, police officers rushed to the sites. There was an unexpected – and fortuitous – confrontation between the two terrorists and the police personnel in which three officers were killed. Subsequently, the two terrorists were challenged by a police party and, in an exchange of fire, one terrorist was killed and one was captured alive. The name of the apprehended terrorist is Mohammed Ajmal Amir. Interrogation and investigation have revealed that he belongs to Village Faridkot , in District Ukada, in the province of Punjab in Pakistan.

5. As information about the terrorist attacks poured in from the Nariman House, Taj Hotel and the Oberoi-Trident Hotel, police parties were rushed to the places.

6. Shortly before 11 p.m. on November 26, 2008, information was received by the Central Government that there were incidents of firing in several places in Mumbai. Immediately, the Central Government authorities got in touch with the authorities of the Government of Maharashtra. At the request of the Government of Maharashtra, the local Army and Navy authorities were asked to provide assistance. Accordingly, the Army deployed 5 columns to cordon off the affected areas and the Navy deployed their commandos to deal with the terrorists. Meanwhile, at about 11.30 p.m., the Government of Maharashtra asked for the National Security Guards. The Central Government immediately alerted the NSG and mobilized their counter terrorist units, based at Manesar in Haryana. A group of around 200 men (which was reinforced the next day) was airlifted to Mumbai late that night. They were deployed at the various sites of the operation in the early hours of November 27, 2008.

7. The operations were conducted under very difficult circumstances: the terrorists were heavily armed, there was a hostage situation, and the terrorists had the advantage of shield and height afforded by the tall buildings that they had entered. Nevertheless, through their patience, skill and bravery, the security forces were able to neutralise the terrorists and rescued hundreds of persons who had been trapped in the buildings. The operations came to an end at about 8.20 a.m. on November 29, 2008.

8. Cases have been registered and the investigations have been entrusted to the Crime Branch of the Mumbai Police. The authorities of the Maharashtra Police and the Central agencies have extended their full support to the Mumbai Police in the conduct of the investigations. Honourable Members will appreciate that it would not be appropriate to disclose any details of the investigations except to draw attention to the official briefings given by the Mumbai Police. Nor would I be able to comment on the many reports that have appeared in the media from time to time. I would respectfully urge patience until the investigations are completed and the reports are filed before the court of law.

9. I am, however, able to say that the finger of suspicion unmistakably points to the territory of our neighbour, Pakistan. The interrogation of the captured terrorist has yielded valuable material evidence. The origins of the ten terrorists who entered India have been established conclusively. There is also abundant evidence gathered from the inflatable rubber dinghy, the fishing vessel and the bodies of the terrorists that has enabled the investigators to reconstruct the sequence of events from the origin to the targets.

10. I know that Honourable Members – as well as the people of the country – would wish to ask a number of questions concerning the nature and extent of the terrorist threat to India, the intelligence gathering machinery, the preparedness of our security forces, the effectiveness of the operations, and on the path forward. There are genuine concerns on each of these matters. I share these concerns. In the last ten days, even while familiarising myself with the security situation and the working of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the intelligence agencies, the Central Paramilitary Forces and the State Police forces. I have initiated a number of steps that will, I believe, enhance security and restore the confidence of the people.

11. Honourable Members, in my assessment, South Asia is in the eye of the storm of terror. Several terrorist organisations operating from territories beyond

India's borders have been identified as the source of the terrorist attacks in India that have occurred over the last several years. India told the United Nations Security Council yesterday that "India will act to safeguard and protect its people from such heinous attacks; however long and difficult that task may be. We have acted with restraint in the face of terrorist attacks. We must do our duty by our people and take all actions as we deem fit to defend and protect them". That is our policy. My colleague, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Minister for External Affairs will intervene in the discussion and deal with the external and diplomatic aspects of the situation arising out of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

12. We have a number of intelligence gathering agencies. Intelligence is shared, evaluated and acted upon. However, I have found that there is a tendency to treat some intelligence inputs that are not specific or precise as not actionable intelligence. Further, the responsibility for acting upon intelligence inputs is quite diffused. In the case of the Mumbai attacks, intelligence regarding a suspected LeT vessel attempting to infiltrate through the sea route was shared with the Director General, Coast Guard and the Principal Director, Naval Intelligence. The Coast Guard made a serious effort, including deploying vessels and aircraft, to locate the suspect vessel, but was not successful. The Navy found that the coordinates of the vessel, as reported, placed it well within the territorial waters of Pakistan. Nevertheless, the Navy had committed several surface units and aircraft in the zone during the period November 19-20, 2008. In the absence of further inputs or information from the agencies concerned, the Navy concluded that no further action could be taken on the basis of the available information.

13. I wish to inform Honourable Members that all aspects concerning intelligence are under my examination. While the basic structure seems sound, there is a need to make intelligence gathering and intelligence sharing more effective and result oriented. Some changes have already been made and more are underway.

14. The NSG is our best trained and best equipped force to counter a terrorist attack. On many occasions in the past – and in Mumbai too – they have displayed exceptional courage and skill. They are hampered by the distance between their headquarters and the airport; the absence of a dedicated aircraft; and the poor logistics in the theatre of operations. Nevertheless, once deployed, the NSG is a very effective counter terrorist force. I have initiated a number of steps to remove the logistical weaknesses in mobilising and deploying the NSG. A decision has been taken to locate NSG units in a few regional hubs. A decision has also been taken to draw upon the commando units of the Armed Forces to create more regional hubs until a decision is taken to locate NSG units in those hubs too. These decisions will be implemented as expeditiously as possible.

15. The Mumbai terrorist attacks have brought into sharp focus the vulnerability of our coastline that extends to 7,500 kms and the imperative need to enhance maritime and coastal security. A coastal security scheme was approved in January 2005 for implementation over a period of five years with an outlay of Rs.400 crore for capital expenditure and Rs.151 crore for recurring expenditure during the first five years. We have reviewed the scheme and we have concluded that there is a need to strengthen it and integrate it into a larger security system. A decision has been taken in-principle to create a Coastal Command for overall supervision and coordination of maritime and coastal security. The mandate of the Coastal Command will be to secure India's coast line.

16. I may also report to this House a number of other decisions that have been taken in order to enhance security:

- (i) Intelligence gathering requires human resources and technical resources. We have identified the gaps. Steps are being taken to fill the vacancies in the intelligence organisations expeditiously and to provide them with advanced technical equipment.
- (ii) India Reserve Battalions are being raised in a number of States with financial assistance from the Central Government. Government have already authorised that two companies of each battalion may be raised as special commando units for which additional assistance will be provided for training, equipment etc.
- (iii) It has been decided to set up 20 counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism schools in different parts of the country for training the commando units of the State police forces.

17. A separate exercise is underway to strengthen the laws relating to terrorist acts. We are in the process of consulting different political parties and I hope to introduce in this session, with the leave of this House, a set of Bills to strengthen the legal provisions relating to the prevention, investigation, prosecution and punishment of terrorist acts. One of the Bills is for setting up a National Investigation Agency. I would urge this House to consider and pass these Bills in this session. I would also urge this House to pass the Amendment Bill to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

18. The Prime Minister, in his address to the Nation on November 27, 2008 declared the resolve of the Government to take the strongest possible measures to ensure the security of the Nation and the people. I promise, on behalf of the Government, that we will strain every nerve to carry this resolve into determined action. There is one thing that I wish to make clear: given the nature of the threat, we cannot go back to "business as usual". In the next few weeks and months, it will be my endeavour to take certain hard decisions and prepare the country and the people to face the challenge of terrorism.

19. I appeal to all sections of this Honourable House and to the people of India to stand united and brave in the face of the challenge of terrorism. I ask you to remember the extraordinary courage of Assistant Sub-Inspector Tukaram Ombale who grabbed the barrel of the gun and took all the bullets in his chest to enable his fellow policemen to overpower Mohammed Ajmal Amir. I ask you to remember the supreme sacrifice made by Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan who ordered his men to stay back while he confronted the terrorists. Ordinary men and women like us cannot match their bravery, but we can stay united in our resolve and in our actions. Nothing should divide us – not religion, not language, not caste. In our fight against terror, there will be need for self-restraint, discipline and even some sacrifice. I seek your support; and I have no doubt that, with your support and the support of the people, we shall overcome and vanquish the forces of terror.